

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sedro Woolly-Bellingham No.1 Impairment Removal

Project No.: 3749

Project Manager: Natasha Gentry

Location: Whatcom County, WA

Transmission Line ROW	Structure Span	Township	Range	Section	County	Ownership/Land Use
Sedro Woolly-Bellingham No.1	12/3 to 12/4	37N	5E	31	Whatcom	Private/Undeveloped

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to address one surface impairment that was identified on the 230-kilovolt Sedro Woolly-Bellingham No.1 transmission line between structures 12/3 and 12/4. At this location, the distance from the conductors to ground surface does not provide adequate clearance for safe transmission line operation at 70°C. BPA proposes to re-shape the existing ground surface in this span to achieve adequate clearance. The proposed work would allow BPA's Sedro Woolly-Bellingham No.1 transmission line to meet current National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards for operation at 70°C.

Approximately 87 cubic yards of soil would be removed from the ground under the conductor span. The soil would be placed in an adjacent area, southeast of the impairment. The total area of disturbance is approximately 0.21 acres.

Following the excavation and placement of soil, all disturbed areas would be stabilized for erosion and sediment control, and revegetated with a seed mix appropriate for the right-of-way. Equipment that would be likely to be used for this project would include a combination of the following: a dump truck, a bulldozer, a backhoe, an excavator and work trucks.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason
Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *December 11, 2017*

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

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Project Site Description

The surface impairment is located on grass & shrub right-of-way surrounded by privately-owned rural residential and forested properties.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Explanation:</u> The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) concurred with BPA’s determination of No Adverse Effect Affect to Historic Properties on November 6, 2017. The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community requested to be notified should human remains or cultural resources be inadvertently discovered. BPA also consulted with the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Indian Tribe, and the Samish Indian Nation; however, they did not provide any comment on the project. ▪ <u>Mitigation:</u> BPA’s Inadvertent Discovery plan must be available on-site at all times during project activities. In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager, interested tribes, DAHP, and the appropriate local, state and federal agencies. Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering. Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access. 	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Geology and Soils</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would disturb approximately 0.21 acres. After ground disturbing activities are completed, soils would be stabilized using BMP C120 and C121 from the Western Washington Stormwater Manual. The “Meadow Mix” from BMP C120 would be used to reseed the area unless the landowner requests a different seed mix. Additional BMPs would be implemented as necessary. No prime or unique farmlands will be affected.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Grasses and shrubs would be removed and the area would be reseeded (as described in 2. Geology and Soils) following soil removal. No federal or state special-status plant species are recorded in the project area.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> No federal or state special-status wildlife species or habitats are recorded in the project area.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: No in-water work is proposed and the closest water body is about 500 feet away.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed work is surface in nature and not anticipated to impact groundwater.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No change in land use and no specially-designated areas were identified.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed work is not anticipated to significantly impact visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Any fugitive dust generated during project implementation is expected to be temporary and minimal.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise from typical utility line equipment will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities will not impact human health or safety.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: A notification letter will be sent by the BPA Realty Specialist to the landowner prior to work.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Oden Jahn

Oden Jahn

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: December 11, 2017